

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 TRSE-00 /095 W
-----001490 142148Z /62

R 140024Z APR 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0685
INFO AMEMBASSY BANJUL
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 01422

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, NI
SUBJECT: AFRICAN GROUP DYNAMICS: WOES OF AN AFRICAN
SUPERPOWER

1. IN DISCUSSION APRIL 13 ON AFRICAN MATTERS, NIGERIAN
MISOFF (FISHER) COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON THE DIFFICULT
TIME NIGERIA CONTINUED TO HAVE IN DEALING WITH THE
AFRICAN GROUP IN NEW YORK. FISHER SAID THAT
NIGERIA'S PROBLEMS INCLUDED NOT JUST FRANCOPHONE
ENMITY CAUSED BY NIGERIA'S DIVISIVE BID FOR A
SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT LAST YEAR AND STANDARD MODERATE/
EXTREMIST DIFFERENCES. A THIRD MONKEY WRENCH IN THE
AFRICAN GROUP MACHINERY, AT LEAST AS FAR AS NIGERIA
WAS CONCERNED, WAS THE CONSIDERABLE COMPETITION
BETWEEN "BIG AFRICAN STATES" (READ NIGERIA) AND "SMALL
AFRICAN STATES". FOR EXAMPLE, NIGERIA NOW FACES
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ANOTHER DIVISIVE CONTRETEMPS OVER ITS BID FOR A SEAT
ON THE UNDP GOVERNING BODY. NIGERIA'S RIVAL IN THIS
CASE IS GAMBIA WHICH, FISHER NOTED, DID NOT EVEN HAVE
A PERMREP IN NEW YORK. FISHER ADDED THAT THERE WELL
MIGHT BE ANOTHER BLOODY ROW IN THE AFRICAN GROUP AND
OAU IN CHOOSING A REPLACEMENT FOR MAURITIUS NEXT FALL
ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

2. FISHER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ONE REASON FOR NIGERIA'S PUSHING SO HARD FOR A GREATER ROLE IN THE UN MECHANISM WAS THAT THE DAYS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA WERE NUMBERED AND THAT THEREFORE IT WANTED TO MOVE AS FAST AND AS FORCEFULLY AS IT COULD BEFORE RELINQUISHING POWER. NIGERIA UNDERSTOOD VERY WELL THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEBITS AMONG FELLOW AFRICANS IT WAS INCURRING BY THIS KIND OF ACTIVISM. BUT NIGERIA FELT THAT IT HAD TO PUSH ITS CASE FOR GREATER RECOGNITION HARD AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. IT WAS SIMPLY UNREALISTIC FOR THE OAU AND AFRICAN GROUP TO OPERATE BY THE FICTION THAT ALL AFRICAN STATES WERE EQUAL. THE OAU AND AFRICAN GROUP SHOULD ACCORD SPECIAL RECOGNITION IN THEIR ALLOCATION OF IMPORTANT SEATS IN UN GOVERNING BODIES TO THE MORE SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN STATES. OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS HAD MECHANISMS FOR DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM BUT NOT THE OAU AND AFRICAN GROUP. THE FACT THAT NIGERIA NOW HAD TO DO BATTLE WITH TINY GAMBIA FOR THE UNDP SEAT WAS ONLY SYMPTOMATIC OF THIS BROADER STRUCTURAL PROBLEM. LEONARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RECOGNITION, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS, COMMITTEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USUNN01422
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0628
Format: TEL
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780453/aaaabtfm.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 768d01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2959088
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFRICAN GROUP DYNAMICS: WOES OF AN AFRICAN SUPERPOWER
TAGS: PORG, NI, XA, UN, AFRICAN GROUP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/768d01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014